

# SPECIMENS OF RARE OR RECENTLY EXTINCT NEW ZEALAND NON-PASSERINE BIRDS IN THE AUCKLAND INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM

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*Abstract.* Auckland Museum holds 162 specimens of rare or recently extinct New Zealand non-passerine birds. These are enumerated for the benefit of intending users of the collection, and all known collecting data are given for their importance as biological records. Present and past systems of numbering specimens of birds at Auckland Museum are reviewed.

Natural history museums are important not just for the inherently interesting specimens that they keep, but also for the documentation pertaining to these specimens. Registers of museum specimens are valuable biological records particularly for research into historical changes in the distribution of species. From time to time Auckland Museum is asked by researchers to supply lists of the collecting details for specimens of particular species. It therefore seems worthwhile to publish these details for rare and recently extinct species that currently attract great interest. Such a list will serve two purposes: to disseminate important records currently contained in registers, and to indicate to potential users of the collection exactly what specimens of the species listed Auckland Museum holds.

The inventory that follows deals with endangered or recently extinct New Zealand non-passerine birds. Following *The red data book of New Zealand* (Williams & Given 1981) the list is limited to endemic species. Sub-species are not treated. Species listed by Williams & Given (1981) but not given here (Chatham Island Taiko *Pterodroma magentae*, New Zealand Little Bittern *Ixobrychus novaezelandiae*, Auckland Island Merganser *Mergus australis* and Chatham Island Oystercatcher *Haematopus chathamensis*) are not represented in the Auckland Museum collection.

The Chatham Island Rail *Rallus modestus* and New Zealand Quail *Coturnix novaezelandiae* were outside the scope of Williams & Given (1981) but are included here for the interest attached to them, even though the second species may not be endemic to New Zealand.

## REGISTRATION OF BIRDS AT AUCKLAND MUSEUM

The oldest surviving register of birds at the Auckland Museum is the "Blue Book", with entries in T. F. Cheeseman's hand. Specimens of New Zealand and foreign vertebrates (except fish) were given simple consecutive numbers (with the suffix "V") and the identity, donor, locality and year of receipt recorded. The register was evidently made in 1898 (the manufacturer's bookplate is dated by hand "20/12/98") and the last year of receipt among the specimens recorded is 1917. However, dates of receipt go back to 1870 showing that records were kept before the register was started, probably only on labels attached to specimens. Cheeseman was appointed in 1874 and there are many entries in the "Blue Book" for specimens that were "In museum 1874 — no history". This suggests that few birds were documented between the founding of the museum in 1852 and Cheeseman's appointment. It is fortunate that Cheeseman had the foresight to begin, at a relatively early period, a system of proper documentation of specimens. Other New Zealand institutions were not so lucky. For example, registration of birds at the National Museum did not begin until 1914 (Gillette & Bartle 1982).

A second register, the "Brown Book", partly replaced the "Blue Book" by listing or relisting specimens of New Zealand mammals and birds (except moas) beginning in taxonomic order and later continuing as specimens were received. Specimens were again assigned simple consecutive numbers. The handwriting is that of L. T. Griffin, Museum Assistant, and later Assistant Curator, from 1908 to 1935. The "Brown Book" was apparently manufactured in 1919, and lists specimens received between 1870 and 1922.

Cheeseman died in office in 1923 and was succeeded as Curator in 1924 by G. Archey. At this time the "Brown Book" was discontinued and a card system for birds (except moas) established. Each species of bird in the collection was given a number with the prefix "AV" (Class Aves). The individual specimens of species 129, for example, were numbered AV129.1, AV129.2, AV129.3, .... The data for each specimen were duplicated on to a pair of 127 mm by 76 mm (5 inch by 3 inch) cards, with one filed numerically and the other alphabetically by scientific name.

The AV system gradually proved unsatisfactory, mainly because extensive renumbering of specimens was needed to keep abreast of taxonomic changes, a problem compounded when it was decided to number subspecies. The system has now been superseded by a bound register for all new accessions of birds. For various reasons some older specimens have been renumbered. Details in the register are copied on to a 127 x 76 mm card which is filed alphabetically. Specimens receive a simple consecutive number with the prefix "B". In the following list specimens are cited by either an AV or B number.

## INVENTORY

***Apteryx owenii* Gould, 1847**

*Skins (10)*. AV1.16, West Coast Sounds (Fiordland), coll. A. J. Jacobs, purch. 1934. AV1.17, ♀, received from W. P. McKenzie 1889. B751, ♂, Kapiti I., coll. 7.VII.1933,



ex. A. C. O'Connor collection. No data, purch. from M. Wigley (♂, juv. ♂, ♀, 2 unsexed). No data (2 ♀♀).

*Mounts* (22). AV1.1, Westland, received from W. H. Jewell 1881. AV1.3 (♀), AV1.4 (♂), Otago, coll. W. Smyth, received 1890. AV1.12, AV1.13, received from J. S. Brigham 1925. AV1.15, albino, received from A. T. Pycroft. AV1.21, Collingwood (Nelson), coll. W. J. Massey, received 1945. AV1.22, Bruce/Jackson Bay area (Westland), coll. 1873, purch. from M. I. Mueller 1950. Martin's Bay (Otago), coll. before 1896, received from L. Blythe 1966 (8). No data, received from B. Halcombe 1962 (3). Ex. A. Kidd collection of c. 1884, received 1958 (1 juv.). No data (2).

*Skeletal Specimens* (3). B229, articulated skeleton, Dusky Sound (Fiordland), coll. W. Smyth, received 1885. B687, subfossil bones, subadult, Waikaremoana, coll. 29.VIII.1930. B708, subfossil bones, Karamu (Waikato), coll. R. T. Seccombe 1925.

*Eggs* (3). B2009, Nelson, coll. 1894. B4018, received 1896-7. B4019, purch. from Mrs Jocelyn.

#### ***Pterodroma axillaris* (Salvin, 1893)**

All specimens are from South East I., Chatham group.

*Skins* (2). AV1361.2, ♀, coll. C. A. Fleming 21.XII.1937. B736.1, wing only, coll. E. G. Turbott 30.XII.1937.

*Skeletal Specimens* (3). B84, B88, pectoral bones, coll. E. G. Turbott 19.XII.1937. B736.2, bones, see B736.1.

#### ***Pterodroma pycrofti* Falla, 1933**

*Skins* (14). AV200.1, paratype, "Cape Maria van Diemen, Mr Rayner, 1896". AV200.2 (holotype, ♂), AV200.3 (paratype, ♀), Hen I., coll. R. A. Falla 27.I.1932. AV200.5, ad. ♀, Marotiri (Chickens) Islands (Hen and Chickens group), coll. E. F. Stead 10.XII.1933. AV200.11 (♀), AV200.12 (♂), AV200.13 (♂), AV200.14 (♀), Hen I., coll. E. F. Stead 26.XI.1933. AV200.16, AV200.17, ad. ♂♂, Hen I., coll. R. A. Falla -I.1937. AV200.18, ad. ♀, Aorangi I. (Poor Knights group), coll. E. G. Turbott 1.XII.1940. AV200.20 (♀), Hen I., coll. R. A. Falla 30.I.1937. AV200.21, Red Mercury I., coll. P. D. G. Skegg 25.XI.1962. AV200.24, juv. ♀, Remuera (Auckland), coll. 24.III.1955.

*Mounts* (2). AV200.4, ad. ♂, Marotiri Islands, coll. E. F. Stead 10.XII.1933. AV200.15, downy nestling, Hen I., coll. E. G. Turbott 28.I.1937.

*Skeletal Specimens* (5). B82, B83, skulls, Chickens Islands, coll. R. A. Falla 25.II.1934. B750, bones, Mount Maunganui, coll. A. H. Watson 1950s. B752 (bones), B753 (skull), Mangawhai Beach (Northland), coll. D. Brathwaite 7.III.1953.

*Eggs* (9). Hen I., coll. E. F. Stead: AV200.6 and AV200.7 (26.XI.1933), B779 (8.XII.1933), B4084 (24.XI.1933). B4085, B4086, Hen I., coll. G. A. Buddle 1.XII.1939. B780, Big Chicken I., coll. -XII.1953. B4087, B4088, Big Chicken I., coll. G. A. Buddle 8.XII.1939.

**Coturnix novaezealandiae** Quoy & Gaimard, 1830

The taxonomic status of the New Zealand Quail is uncertain. It may be conspecific with the Stubble Quail *C. pectoralis* Gould, 1837 of Australia.

*Skins* (2). No data (2 relaxed mounts).

*Mounts* (2). AV58.1, Nelson, coll. Mr St. John, received 1874. No data (1).

*Skeletal Specimens* (1). B635, subfossil humerus, Red Mercury I., coll. R. B. Sibson 20.XII.1965.

**Rallus modestus** Hutton, 1872

*Mounts* (2). AV56.1 (♂), AV56.2 (♀, Mangere I.), Chatham Islands, purch. from Mr Hawkins 1892.

**Notornis mantelli** Owen, 1848

*Skins* (1). B2088, sample of body feathers only, Takahe Valley (Fiordland), coll. -I.1959.

*Skeletal Specimens* (1). B683, subfossil tibiotarsus, Scinde I. (Napier), coll. J. A. Berry 1951.

**Thinornis novaeseelandiae** (Gmelin, 1789)

*Skins* (24). AV68.7 (♂), AV68.12 (♀), "Chatham Is. 1894 Danneford". AV68.10, AV68.15, Chatham Islands. AV68.11, relaxed mount, Chatham Islands, coll. S. Dannefaerd, received 1911. Coll. S. Dannefaerd (6 ♂♂, 6 ♀♀). Remaining skins are from South East I., Chatham group. AV68.20 (chick), AV68.23 (ad. ♂), coll. -XII.1937. AV68.21 (ad. ♂), AV68.22 (ad. ♀), coll. 5.XII.1937. AV68.24 (imm. ♀), coll. Dannefaerd, ex. A. C. O'Connor collection. AV68.25 (ad. ♂), coll. 20.XII.1937. AV68.26 (ad. ♀), coll. 19.XII.1937.

*Mounts* (2). AV68.1, ♂, Chatham Islands, coll. S. Dannefaerd. AV68.18, ♀, coll. S. Dannefaerd.

*Eggs* (1). B4083, clutch of 3, South East I., coll. 20.XII.1937.

**Himantopus novaezealandiae** Gould, 1841

*Skins* (3). AV1140.1, ♀, Mangere (Auckland), coll. W. J. Cheeseman 1.VII.1879. AV1140.2, ♂, Manukau (Auckland), coll. -IX.1882, received from F. H. Combes 1930. AV1140.7, ♂, Mangere, coll. S. M. Reed 21.XI.1976.

*Mounts* (2). AV1140.3, south head Kaipara Harbour, received from K. A. Snedden 1939. AV1140.6, ad. ♂, Waikato, received from F. H. Combes 1886.

*Eggs* (3). AV1140.4, clutch of 4, coll. J. C. McLean 1900. AV1140.5, clutch of 4, Tukituki River (Hawke Bay), coll. J. C. McLean 22.XII.1884. B2087, single egg, upper reaches Ahuriri River (Otago), coll. R. J. Nilsson 1.XI.1983.



**Cyanoramphus malherbi** (Souance, 1857)

The taxonomic status of the Orange-fronted Parakeet is uncertain. It may be a colour variant of the Yellow-crowned Parakeet *C. auriceps* (Kuhl, 1820) – see Nixon (1981).

*Skins* (2). AV44.5, ad. ♂, Owen Junction (Nelson), coll. A. C. O'Connor 14.VIII.1928 (see Fleming 1980). A second skin is either AV44.1 (Otago, coll. W. Smyth, received 1885) or AV44.2 (Nelson, coll. Mr St. John before 1874).

*Mounts* (2). AV44.3, Nelson, coll. Mr St. John before 1874. AV44.4, ♀, Otago, received from Otago Museum 1878.

**Cyanoramphus unicolor** (Lear, 1831)

All specimens are from Antipodes Island.

*Skins* (4). AV45.3, AV45.4, ad. ♀♀, coll. -.XI.1962. AV45.5, AV45.6, ad. ♀♀, coll. E. G. Turbott 9.XI.1950.

*Mounts* (2). AV45.1, AV45.2, deposited A. W. Bethune 1902.

*Skeletal Specimens* (3). B737, B2030 (♂), B2037 (♀), bones, coll. E. G. Turbott -.XI.1950.

**Strigops habroptilus** Gray, 1845

*Skins* (10). AV41.11, ♂, Pyke's Creek (Upper Hollyford River, Fiordland), coll. -.IX.1894. AV41.12, ♂, head of Lake McKerrow (Fiordland), coll. -.VIII.1894. AV41.19, West Coast Sounds, coll. A. J. Jacobs, purch. 1934. South I., purch. from M. Wigley (4). No data, Cheeseman collection (1). No data, F. O. Peat collection, deposited 1934 (1). No data, purch. from Newton Hotel 1945 (1).

*Mounts* (12). AV41.2, AV41.3, AV41.4, Dusky Sound, coll. A. Reischek, received 1884. AV41.6, ♂, Milford Sound, received from Sir George Grey 1882. AV41.13, AV41.14, received from J. S. Brigham 1925. AV41.21, yellow mutant, Jackson Bay (Westland), coll. G. Mueller (mentioned by Buller 1888: 178). Martin's Bay (Otago), coll. before 1896, received from L. Blythe 1966 (2). No data, purch. from M. I. Mueller 1950 (1). No data, received from B. Halcombe 1962 (1). No data (1).

*Skeletal Specimens* (9). AV41.1 (received 1881), B299 (received 1884), articulated skeletons, Dusky Sound, coll. A. Reischek. Subfossil bones: B4, Hamilton, coll. J. Hobson. B5, Karamu (Waikato), received from R. T. Seccombe 1925. B6, South Fiord (Lake Te Anau), coll. G. Maire, received 1962. B539, Karamu (Waikato), coll. J. Pybus 21.XI.1953. B680, Doubtless Bay (Northland), coll. G. Archey 1940. B684, Waikaremoana, coll. 1930. B749, Frankton (Waikato), coll. R. T. Seccombe.

**Sceloglaux albifacies** (Gray, 1844)

*Mounts* (1). B748, limestone cliffs near Pleasant Point (Canterbury), coll. T. H. Potts, received 1903.

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